

34. (Amended) A method of manufacturing a liquid crystal display device comprising:

forming a semiconductor film over a substrate having an upper surface and a lower surface, wherein said upper surface is an insulating surface;

Dg flattening said substrate by vacuum-sucking said substrate onto a stage having a flat surface and at least one suction inlet in such a manner that said lower surface of said substrate is in contact with said flat surface of the stage; and

irradiating said semiconductor film with a laser beam, while said lower surface of said substrate is in contact with said flat surface of the stage.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified case is requested.

Claims 7-46, as amended, remain in the application.

The indication that claims 19-30 and 41-44 are allowed is appreciatively noted.

Section 102 Rejections

Claims 7-18, 31-40, 45 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Imahashi et al. (U.S.P. 5,413,953).

Applicant teaches forming a semiconductor film on a substrate, flattening the substrate by drawing a vacuum at a bottom side of the substrate onto a flat surface, and irradiating the semiconductor film with a laser beam while the substrate is being flattened by the force of the vacuum. Applicants have discovered that flattening the substrate onto a flat surface during a laser annealing operation produces a dispersion of the mobility of the crystalline silicon film of about $\pm 10\%$ whereas laser annealing without flattening the substrate provides a dispersion of about $\pm 15\%$ to $\pm 40\%$ (see page 53, lines 1-7 in the Specification).

Imahashi et al. disclose transporting substrates in a common transport unit 322 using a vacuum chuck (column 17, line 13) but wafer transport is the only use of a vacuum chuck mentioned. Imahashi et al. does not disclose flattening the substrate using a vacuum chuck while it is being processed in the laser annealing device (318) (column 17, lines 63-68).

The claims generally recite that the substrate is flattened by an applied vacuum during a laser annealing operation.

Imahashi et al. do not disclose or suggest flattening the substrate against a flat surface by means of a vacuum during the laser annealing operation. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 31, and 34, and their dependencies are allowable.

Applicant submits that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, which action is requested. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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